

Chapter 1

Public Service Commission, Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice: Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service



Overall Conclusions

- The Public Service Commission promotes diversity and inclusion, but has not completed all actions outlined in its diversity and inclusion strategy or assessed whether the goals of the strategy were met.
- The Public Service Commission does not have an adequate process to identify, collect, and analyze data needed to evaluate the effectiveness of its diversity and inclusion work.
- The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice promote diversity and inclusion, but improvements are needed.

Raising the Bar: A strategy to promote diversity and inclusion in the public service

- The Public Service Commission did not use implementation and evaluation plans to manage its diversity and inclusion strategy
 - 8 of 16 strategic actions tested were not completed
- The Public Service Commission did not evaluate whether the goals of its diversity and inclusion strategy were met
- Despite shortcomings in implementation and evaluation, actions were taken to promote diversity and inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion Data

- The Public Service Commission does not have an adequate process to identify and collect diversity and inclusion data
- Data gathered through the Province's biannual demographic survey is based on self-reporting and as a result may not be complete
- Data needed to evaluate the diversity and inclusion strategy was not collected

Employment Equity Policy

- The Public Service Commission does not assess department compliance with the Employment Equity policy or assess the effectiveness of the policy
- Public Service Commission, Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice have limited tracking of staff completion of mandatory diversity and employment equity training
 - Only 3 of 25 Public Service Commission employees tested had completed diversity and employment equity training
- Processes are needed to regularly review human resources practices to reduce barriers for designated groups
- Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice promote diversity and inclusion, but did not clearly assess if goals are achieved

Communication

- Public Service Commission, Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice regularly communicate diversity and inclusion information



Recommendations at a Glance

Recommendation 1.1

The Public Service Commission should develop and use an implementation plan for future diversity and inclusion strategies.

Recommendation 1.2

The Public Service Commission should develop and use evaluation plans for future diversity and inclusion strategies. There should be regular reporting on progress toward achieving the goals of the strategies.

Recommendation 1.3

The Public Service Commission should implement a process to identify, collect, and analyze data needed to assess diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives.

Recommendation 1.4

The Public Service Commission should implement a process to assess the effectiveness and consistent application of the Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies.

Recommendation 1.5

The Public Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should communicate to staff the need to complete mandatory training, as well as track the completion of training by all staff.

Recommendation 1.6

The Public Service Commission should evaluate how training is delivered to make it as accessible as possible to staff. Policy guidance should also be developed and include timeframes for when training should be completed and whether it needs to be retaken at regular intervals.

Recommendation 1.7

The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should work with the Public Service Commission to develop and implement formal processes to regularly review their human resources practices to identify and remove barriers to employment, retention, and advancement for members of the designated groups.

Recommendation 1.8

The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should ensure diversity and employment equity progress reports clearly assess the status of diversity and inclusion goals. These reports should also be communicated to staff throughout the departments.

1 Public Service Commission, Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice: Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service

Raising the Bar: A strategy to build diversity and inclusion in the public service

- 1.1 The Government of Nova Scotia manages a workforce of over 11,000 employees, including individuals of differing ethnicity, gender, age, and sexual orientation. It states that it is committed to being a workforce that is free of discrimination and is representative of the designated groups: Aboriginal People, African Nova Scotians and Other Racially Visible Persons, Persons with Disabilities, and Women in Under-represented Positions. This involves promoting an inclusive and culturally competent workforce that values cultural perspectives and recognizes how a diverse workforce may increase employee engagement, create new approaches to problem solving, and improve productivity.
- 1.2 The Public Service Commission is responsible for ensuring the Government of Nova Scotia has the human resources required to create and deliver high-quality programs and services to citizens. This includes leading efforts to attract, retain, and celebrate diversity and equity within the public service by focusing on attracting, hiring, and promoting workers from diverse backgrounds.
- 1.3 While the Public Service Commission leads the efforts, responsibility for diversity and inclusion is shared amongst all government departments and employees. Departments are responsible for supporting the Government's overall direction on diversity and inclusion by implementing policies and participating in programs and initiatives.

Implementation and evaluation plans were not used for the Province's diversity strategy

- 1.4 The Public Service Commission did not use an implementation plan to guide work related to *Raising the Bar: A strategy to build diversity and inclusion in the public service*. No assessment was completed to determine whether the goals of the Strategy were met.
- 1.5 This four-year strategy was developed with assistance from an external consultant and released in 2014. It identified four overall goals supported by 32 strategic actions to promote diversity and inclusion in the public service. The goals are listed below.
 - We demonstrate, and are accountable for, our ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion.



- We equitably represent the public we serve at all levels of the workforce.
 - We ensure an inclusive and respectful workplace, free of harassment and discrimination.
 - We are a culturally competent workforce that values diversity and inclusion.
- 1.6 One of the strategic actions included in the Raising the Bar strategy was the development of implementation and evaluation plans. Despite both being created when the strategy document was prepared, neither was used by the Public Service Commission. The implementation plan outlined important details including who would lead the work, timelines for completion, as well as potential challenges when completing strategic actions and how these could be mitigated. The evaluation plan identified potential measures and data that could be used to assess progress towards the goals of the strategy.
- 1.7 Over the four-year period of the strategy, the Public Service Commission provided updates on work completed to promote diversity and inclusion. However, these updates did not include the status of strategic actions or assess progress toward reaching the goals of the strategy. We selected a sample of 16 strategic actions and found 8 were incomplete. Appendix II provides an overview of the strategic actions included in the strategy, as well as our testing results. Examples of strategic actions that have not been completed include:
- develop and implement a diversity recruitment strategy
 - increase the participation of under-represented groups on hiring panels
 - explore opportunities for the inclusion of women in non-traditional roles in government workplaces
- 1.8 Implementation and evaluation plans, along with regularly assessing and reporting on progress towards goals, are necessary to ensure ongoing work is focused on achieving the goals of the strategy. These processes would have helped the Public Service Commission identify strategic actions that had not been completed and provided a chance to work on them.
- 1.9 Despite the weaknesses noted above, various actions were completed by the Public Service Commission to promote diversity and inclusion. For example, the Commission created guidelines to support transgender employees, implemented a program to build awareness of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and established new positions within the Public Service Commission restricted to people from designated groups (Aboriginal People, African Nova Scotians and other Racially Visible Persons, and Persons with Disabilities).
- 1.10 Public Service Commission management indicated they are currently developing a new diversity and inclusion strategy to replace Raising the Bar.



We encourage them to continue this work and ensure the proper processes are in place to guide implementation and evaluation.

Recommendation 1.1

The Public Service Commission should develop and use an implementation plan for future diversity and inclusion strategies.

***Public Service Commission Response:** The Public Service Commission agrees with this recommendation. In 2014, the PSC launched a four-year diversity and inclusion strategy, which was the first of its kind for the Province of Nova Scotia. The goals and objectives were identified to advance diversity and inclusion in a coordinated manner. Four goals, and over 30 strategic actions, were identified, and the PSC has directed its efforts toward all four goals. We recognize that more is required. With the first strategy now concluded, we are currently developing the next strategy. As a part of the new strategy, we will develop an implementation plan, including deliverables, project leads, timelines, and risks, that will be utilized as work is undertaken. Timing: October 2019*

Recommendation 1.2

The Public Service Commission should develop and use evaluation plans for future diversity and inclusion strategies. There should be regular reporting on progress toward achieving the goals of the strategies.

***Public Service Commission Response:** The Public Service Commission agrees with this recommendation. The PSC agrees that evaluation, monitoring, and regular reporting are critical to ensure efficacy, efficiency, and that we are meeting the outcomes that we strive toward. We will develop and implement regular reporting and evaluation techniques in the new diversity and inclusion strategy. We have already started consultation with monitoring and evaluation experts internally and with ResearchNS for the development of an evaluation plan for the new strategy. The requirement to report on progress under the Employment Equity Policy will continue to be communicated through an annual report tabled in the legislature. This report will also reflect more robust and detailed reporting on both progress and effort by the Public Service Commission and other departments. Timing: September 2019 and annually thereafter*

Diversity and Inclusion Data



Adequate diversity and inclusion data is not collected to monitor effectiveness of diversity and inclusion work

- 1.11 The Public Service Commission does not have an adequate process to identify and collect data needed to assess the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives. The need for improved data to assess diversity and inclusion in the Nova Scotia public sector was a consistent theme heard during the audit. Adequate data is needed to identify areas where diversity and inclusion work should be focused, as well as determining if programs and initiatives are achieving their objectives.



- 1.12 The evaluation plan developed for Raising the Bar outlined data that could be collected and used to evaluate the impact of the Strategy. For example, Raising the Bar aimed to improve the recruitment, screening, and selection processes for under-represented groups. The evaluation plan identified measures such as the ratio of qualified under-represented applicants to hires, and the percentage of hiring personnel that have received diversity training, as measures that could be used to determine if the objective had been met. However, as noted earlier, this plan was not used, and the necessary data was not collected.
- 1.13 Currently, the Public Service Commission relies on the *Count Yourself In!* survey to collect information on the diversity of the Government of Nova Scotia workforce every two years. This survey aims to gather information including the age, gender, and ethnicity of employees. However, this is a voluntary survey that relies on participants to self-report. As a result, the data may not give a complete measure of diversity within the provincial government workforce. For example, people may choose to not complete the survey or people who are part of a designated group may choose to not self-identify. Management indicated there are a variety of reasons for this, including anxiety experienced by some people related to self-identifying and a lack of understanding of why the information is being collected and how it is used.
- 1.14 While we recognize there are challenges to gathering diversity and inclusion data, it is important for the Public Service Commission to identify what data is needed, and available, as well as how this data can be collected and used. Otherwise, programs and initiatives may not be meeting their intended goals, and resources might not be focused on areas where they are most needed, or can have the biggest impact.

Recommendation 1.3

The Public Service Commission should implement a process to identify, collect, and analyze data needed to assess diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives.

***Public Service Commission Response:** The Public Service Commission agrees with this recommendation. Data collection and analysis are a key component to assess effectiveness of diversity programs and initiatives. The Deputies Council has decided that the new diversity and inclusion strategy will include a focus on measurement, to be implemented through the Public Service Commission. Our present data collection processes are under review and we will be developing both technological and process solutions. The PSC will also develop a robust process to identify, collect, and analyze data related to the new goals of the diversity strategy which will be critical in the achievement of the next diversity and inclusion strategy. Timing: October 2019*



Diversity and Inclusion Policies

The Public Service Commission does not assess department compliance with Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies

- 1.15 The Public Service Commission does not assess department compliance with the Province's Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies or assess the effectiveness of these policies. These are the two key provincial government policies related to the promotion of diversity and inclusion.
- 1.16 The Employment Equity Policy includes requirements such as mandatory training, reporting on diversity and inclusion initiatives undertaken by departments, and continuous monitoring of human resources practices to identify and remove barriers for members of designated groups. The Respectful Workplace Policy aims to promote an awareness and understanding of what is considered offensive behavior, as well as provide a way to address it when it occurs.
- 1.17 Each policy states that the Public Service Commission is responsible for assessing the effectiveness and consistent application of the policy, but we were told by management this is not done. Regular assessments are necessary to ensure departments are satisfying the requirements under the policies. Our work at the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice identified areas where improvements are needed to comply with the Employment Equity Policy. These are discussed in more detail below.

Recommendation 1.4

The Public Service Commission should implement a process to assess the effectiveness and consistent application of the Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies.

***Public Service Commission Response:** The Public Service Commission agrees with this recommendation. These policies are reflective of our Public Service values and build a foundation toward providing safe, inclusive work environments. As a part of the new strategy on diversity, the PSC will regularly monitor the effectiveness and consistent application of the Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies. The Public Service Commission will develop reporting criteria, measurement parameters and a reporting template to monitor the consistent application of these policies across all departments in the NS public service. Both Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies are currently under review and will explicitly state that the PSC is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness. Timing: May 2020*

Mandatory training is not completed or tracked

- 1.18 Public Service Commission employees have not completed mandatory diversity and respectful workplace training. We selected a sample of 25 Public Service Commission employees and found only 3 had completed the



diversity and employment equity course and only 12 had completed respectful workplace training. We were told managers are responsible for ensuring all staff have done this training, but there is no documentation to demonstrate that this monitoring is done.

- 1.19 The Public Service Commission does not monitor the completion of training within other departments. The Employment Equity Policy states that each department shall ensure employees participate in mandatory diversity and employment equity training. However, management at the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice indicated there is limited tracking of staff completion of this training. They indicated that if they wanted this information, they would rely on the Public Service Commission to provide it. We also found limited communication by management within the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice on the need for staff to complete this training.
- 1.20 In addition, while the Public Service Commission has the tools available to track staff training, we found potential issues with the accuracy of information in the database. For example, we were told attendance sheets from training sessions are not always entered into the database. There is risk some staff may have completed the training, but it has not been entered.

Recommendation 1.5

The Public Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should communicate to staff the need to complete mandatory training, as well as track the completion of training by all staff.

***Public Service Commission Response:** The Public Service Commission agrees with this recommendation. As a part of the new diversity and inclusion strategy and revised Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies, communicating with employees about available training courses will remain a key priority. The PSC will coordinate with departments to ensure that training is tracked. A new Learning Management System has already been implemented, which will provide a technological solution to better monitor completion of training. Timing: May 2020*

***Department of Agriculture Response:** The Department of Agriculture agrees with this statement. A list of all mandatory training will be provided in the orientation package for new staff by June 2019. In addition, the listing will be provided to managers and supervisors who will ensure mandatory training is completed by all their staff. Agriculture will work with the Public Service Commission to ensure all mandatory training is tracked through their learning management system.*

***Department of Community Services Response:** The Department of Community Services accepts this recommendation. We support the need for all employees to complete all mandatory training in a timely manner, including mandatory diversity and employment equity training. We believe in the importance of providing culturally competent services to the Nova Scotians that we serve, and training is an important component of ensuring staff can achieve this goal. We*



will complete an initial assessment of how many staff have not yet completed mandatory training. Training will be made a regular recurring agenda item at senior management meetings in order to communicate and reinforce the importance among managers to individually support and monitor their staff in completing mandatory training. We will work with the PSC to develop a training plan over the next 12 months, after which we will regularly monitor the completion of training.

Department of Justice Response: *The Department of Justice is supportive of this recommendation. Although information on mandatory training has been communicated to staff, we recognize the need for consistency across all Divisions. The Department recognizes the importance of all staff being made aware of the mandatory training requirements and will take the necessary steps to ensure that this is widely communicated in a consistent manner. Managers and Supervisors will be supported to ensure they are aware of these requirements and that they are well positioned to support and monitor all direct reports to meet the mandatory training requirements. The Department will include this in our orientation for all new employees. Department of Justice will work closely with our colleagues at the Public Service Commission to ensure that all mandatory training requirements are tracked through the learning management system. This will be included in the Department's Diversity and Inclusion Plan.*



Inconsistent information related to mandatory training

- 1.21 We found inconsistent information for the timeframes staff have to take mandatory training and whether the training needs to be retaken at regular intervals. We found some documentation indicating the training must be completed within six months of an employee's start date, while other documentation did not provide any timeframe. Public Service Commission staff told us the completion of classroom-based training, such as the diversity and employment equity course within six months of hire, was unrealistic given the limited number of times the training is offered and the number of people who need to complete it.
- 1.22 The Employment Equity Policy does not comment on whether the diversity and employment equity training must be retaken at regular intervals, but the guidelines that accompany the policy suggest it should be retaken every three to five years. Public Service Commission staff we interviewed said the training need only be completed once. We also found no documentation indicating if respectful workplace training has to be refreshed.
- 1.23 While we recognize delivering training to over 11,000 provincial government employees is challenging, if the training is considered mandatory, there should be clear and consistent information around timeframes for completion and whether and how frequently the training must be retaken.



Recommendation 1.6

The Public Service Commission should evaluate how training is delivered to make it as accessible as possible to staff. Policy guidance should also be developed and include timeframes for when training should be completed and whether it needs to be retaken at regular intervals.

Public Service Commission Response: The Public Service Commission agrees with this recommendation. The PSC agrees that making training accessible to all employees will continue to be a priority. We are currently reviewing our course offerings, course content, delivery methodologies and alternative offerings. In collaboration with other departments, we are identifying and training a greater number of facilitators across the public service. We will continue to provide high quality, experiential training. The Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies and guidelines are currently under review. In the new guidelines we will identify priorities to address department needs, client service and timelines consistent with the new diversity strategy. Timing: September 2020



No process in place to regularly review human resources practices to reduce barriers for designated groups

- 1.24 The Public Service Commission, along with the departments of Community Services and Justice, have recently taken steps to address and remove barriers for employment equity groups by designating positions that can only be filled by people from designated groups. For example, the Department of Justice designated certain correctional officer positions that had to be filled by African Nova Scotians or Aboriginal applicants and provided additional support to assist applicants with the hiring process. Justice also has a program to hire law students from designated groups as summer students or articling clerks within the Legal Services Division of the department. In addition to designating positions, the Department of Justice has delivered training to some staff to develop a better understanding of Aboriginal and Mi'kmaq culture.
- 1.25 Management at the Department of Agriculture indicated employment equity is considered in all hiring decisions, but specific examples of work completed to identify and reduce barriers could not be provided. The Province's Employment Equity Policy requires each department to continually monitor their human resources processes to identify and remove barriers to employment, retention, and advancement for members of designated groups. This could include the processes used to recruit, hire, and train staff, such as reviewing position descriptions to ensure only necessary qualifications are included, or ensuring interview panels include members from designated groups.
- 1.26 It is important for departments to continue to work toward removing barriers for designated groups. Despite some of the work completed, department staff we spoke with expressed the need for improvements. Specific concerns included:



- the need for more diversity in departments, especially at the senior levels
- improved cultural awareness and unconscious bias training for hiring managers
- better use of Public Service Commission diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives

1.27 The guidelines that accompany the Employment Equity Policy provide suggestions for how departments can review their human resources practices to better promote diversity. The guidelines provide suggestions for processes that can be reviewed and criteria for identifying barriers. The Public Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice could all benefit from a more formalized approach to review their practices around recruitment, selection, and retention. A more formalized approach could assist departments in ensuring regular reviews are completed and resources are focused on areas that could have the greatest impact.

Recommendation 1.7

The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should work with the Public Service Commission to develop and implement formal processes to regularly review their human resources practices to identify and remove barriers to employment, retention, and advancement for members of the designated groups.

***Public Service Commission Response:** The Public Service Commission agrees with this recommendation. The PSC will develop and implement a consistent methodology for the review of systemic barriers regarding recruitment, retention, and advancement of equity candidates and employees. The PSC has recently conducted an organizational restructuring, where the Recruitment, Diversity, and Organizational Development units will reside within the same division. This restructuring was conducted, in part, to clearly reflect the linkages between these areas and to create further synergies toward reducing barriers in recruitment and advancement for equity-seeking groups. The PSC agrees that, while the Employment Equity policy requires departments to monitor human resource practices regarding diversity, we would benefit from a formalized approach to review these practices. The new diversity and inclusion strategy, and Employment Equity policy review, will define a process to assist departments in a coordinated and meaningful manner. Timing: January 2020*

***Department of Agriculture Response:** The Department of Agriculture agrees with this statement. Agriculture will work with the Public Service Commission to implement the corporate methodology developed to achieve this recommendation through supervisory awareness and training. This training will occur as soon as operationally possible following the development of the corporate methodology, but not exceeding six months of the development.*



Department of Community Services Response: *The Department of Community Services accepts this recommendation. We now have work underway in this area and are proud to have designated two management positions in 2018. We are also working with the PSC to set specific targets for DCS regarding continuing to increase diversity of staffing across the department. We will collaborate with the PSC so that by the end of 2020 we will have developed and implemented processes to regularly review our human resource practices to ensure we take every effort to remove barriers to employment, retention, and advancement for members of designated groups. As part of this work we will complete an initial review of our departmental human resource practices, using the Employment Equity Hiring Policy Guidelines, to inform the creation of an action plan that would address areas for improvement.*

Department of Justice Response: *The Department of Justice is supportive of this recommendation. Recent additions include two Indigenous Liaison Officers; an African Nova Scotian Program Officer and a Cultural Liaison Provincial Program Officer. These positions meet the needs of those in the justice system; serve as a cultural resource for staff; and work closely with community. The Department continues to hire graduates from the Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq (IB&M) Program to article with Legal Services Division. The Department's diversity and inclusion plan will focus on recruitment, retention and advancement and cultural events. The Department just completed a workshop with colleagues from the Public Service Commission to identify targets to improve recruitment of designated groups. The Department continues to work closely with our colleagues from the Public Service Commission to have formal processes in place to regularly review the human resource practices and this has been captured in our diversity and inclusion department wide plan.*



Progress toward goals is not assessed in employment equity progress reports

- 1.28 The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice submitted annual diversity and employment equity progress reports to the Public Service Commission as required in the Province's Employment Equity Policy. These reports outlined departmental diversity and inclusion goals and work completed to promote diversity and inclusion within the departments. However, the departments did not clearly assess the status of their goals based on the work completed. For example, the Department of Community Services has a goal to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce that is representative, at all job levels, of the citizens they serve. However, in the employment equity progress reports, there was no assessment of the progress toward this goal or what specific actions had been taken. This is similar to the issue identified earlier of the Public Service Commission not assessing the status of goals included in Raising the Bar.
- 1.29 The Public Service Commission prepared a template to guide departments in completing their diversity and employment equity progress updates. However, the template does not include guidance for assessing the status of diversity and inclusion goals. The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice each used this template in preparing their annual progress updates.



- 1.30 We also noted that the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice are not communicating the employment equity progress updates with department staff. While the reports are sent to the Public Service Commission, we saw no evidence of the reports being circulated within the departments. Sharing these reports would help ensure staff are aware of departmental diversity and inclusion goals and encourage staff commitment to the diversity and inclusion work.
- 1.31 The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice promote diversity and inclusion in a variety of ways that are consistent with the goals of *Raising the Bar: A strategy to build diversity and inclusion in the public service*. In addition to designating positions for people from designated groups, departments provide training and development opportunities for staff and share diversity and inclusion related information and events.
- 1.32 While we are pleased to see the promotion of diversity and inclusion at the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice, it is important to use the work completed to assess the departments' progress toward their goals. This would help to ensure goals are met and also encourages continual progress toward improving diversity and inclusion within departments.

Recommendation 1.8

The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should ensure diversity and employment equity progress reports clearly assess the status of diversity and inclusion goals. These reports should also be communicated to staff throughout the departments.

Department of Agriculture Response: The Department of Agriculture agrees with this statement. Starting with the 2018-2019 Diversity and Employment Equity Progress Report, the Department will include an assessment of the stated goals. In addition, the finalized Departmental Reports will be posted on our intranet site and communicated through a weekly internal news bulletin.

Department of Community Services Response: The Department of Community Services accepts this recommendation. We have consistently produced this annual report and are open to making improvements, beginning with the 2018-19 report, that will make clear connections between the work completed and assessing progress toward our stated goals. We will produce a report with strong and clear assessment of the status of progress toward employment equity goals. We commit to sharing and promoting the completed report with our staff as part of our ongoing efforts to increase awareness of diversity and inclusion issues, training, and initiatives.

Department of Justice Response: The Department of Justice is supportive of this recommendation. The Department has produced a report every year and submitted same to the Public Service Commission. Beginning with the 2018-19 progress report, extra effort will be given to ensure the report clearly assesses the status of diversity and inclusion goals. The Department continues to improve internal communication



efforts and will have a communication plan in place to ensure this important information is shared broadly and consistently department wide in all Divisions. This will be completed through regular email communication, staff meetings as well as being posted on the department's recently revamped internal SharePoint site.

Departmental Diversity Committees



Diversity and inclusion committees were established

- 1.33 Both the departments of Agriculture and Community Services have committees focused on promoting diversity and inclusion within each department. The committees play a role in preparing the annual diversity and employment equity progress updates and help communicate diversity and inclusion information to staff. The Department of Justice did not have a diversity committee during our audit period, but established one in January 2019.
- 1.34 We are encouraged to see that the Department of Community Services' diversity committee established goals to work toward in 2018 to 2021. Goals include:
- enhancing awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion
 - providing input on departmental diversity and inclusion policies and programs
 - developing partnerships to promote diversity and inclusion across the provincial government.
- 1.35 The Department of Agriculture's diversity committee is in the process of developing a plan to guide its work. It is important for the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice to continue to support the work the diversity and inclusion committees.

Communication



Diversity and inclusion information is regularly communicated within the public service

- 1.36 The Public Service Commission uses a variety of methods to communicate diversity and inclusion policy requirements and initiatives across the public service including:
- government-wide emails
 - Province of Nova Scotia website
 - employee intranet
 - new employee orientation



- employee training
- biannual Diversity Conference

1.37 We also found that the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice communicate diversity and inclusion initiatives within their departments using many of the same methods as the Public Service Commission as well as looking for ways to improve their communication. In each department, Deputy Ministers were directly involved in the communication of diversity and inclusion information using methods such as emails to staff and webinars. The involvement of senior management helps highlight each department's commitment to the promotion of diversity and inclusion.



Additional Comments from the Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission welcomes the report of the Office of the Auditor General and recommendations on how to best advance diversity and inclusion within the Nova Scotia Public Service.

The PSC has been recognized as an organizational leader in diversity across Canada and we remain committed to our diversity, inclusion, and equity goals. We are currently developing a new diversity and inclusion strategy and are revising the Employment Equity and Respectful Workplace policies, guidelines, and procedures. As decided by Deputies Council this new strategy will focus on senior leadership accountability, building leadership capacity, diversifying leadership, measuring progress and effort, and barrier and solution identification.

The PSC is responsible for human resource management policies and programs to help create an engaged and diverse workforce. Creating safe, respectful workplaces, where all employees feel supported, is of utmost importance. Using fair human resource practices which remove employment systems barriers, providing training so employees have the knowledge and skills they need, and collecting relevant data to inform program decisions, are among our highest priorities. We are eager to continue our work and are confident that our new diversity strategy and implementation plan will address the recommendations contained in the Auditor General's report.



Appendix I

Reasonable Assurance Engagement Description and Conclusions

In winter 2019, we completed an independent assurance report of the Public Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice. The purpose of this performance audit was to determine whether the Raising the Bar strategy was implemented, and diversity and inclusion was promoted across the government and within the departments.

It is our role to independently express a conclusion about whether the Public Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice comply in all significant respects with the applicable criteria. Management at the Public Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice acknowledged their responsibility for the promotion of diversity and inclusion.

The audit was performed to a reasonable level of assurance in accordance with the Canadian Standard for Assurance Engagements (CSAE) 3001 – Direct Engagements set out by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada; and Sections 18 and 21 of the Auditor General Act.

We apply the Canadian Standard on Quality Control 1 and, accordingly, maintain a comprehensive system of quality control, including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards, and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

In conducting the audit work, we complied with the independence and other ethical requirements of the Code of Professional Conduct of Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia, as well as those outlined in Nova Scotia's Code of Conduct for public servants.

The objectives and criteria used in the audit are below:

Objective:

1. To determine if the Public Service Commission has successfully implemented *Raising the Bar: A strategy to build diversity and inclusion in the public service*.

Criteria:

1. The Public Service Commission should have information to demonstrate completion of the diversity and inclusion strategy.
2. The Public Service Commission should assess whether the goals and objectives of the diversity and inclusion strategy were achieved.



Objective:

2. To determine if the Public Service Commission is implementing policies and initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion within the provincial public sector.

Criteria:

1. The Public Service Commission should have policies related to diversity and inclusion in the public sector.
2. The Public Service Commission should be monitoring compliance with policies related to diversity and inclusion in the public sector and taking steps to address noncompliance, along with assessing the effectiveness of policies.
3. The Public Service Commission should develop and implement initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion in the public sector.
4. The Public Service Commission should communicate diversity and inclusion policy requirements and initiatives to the public sector.

Objective:

3. To determine if the Public Service Commission is collecting, analyzing, and reporting data related to diversity and inclusion, and using it to inform decisions.

Criteria:

1. The Public Service Commission should have a process to identify the data it needs related to diversity and inclusion in the public sector.
2. The Public Service Commission should collect, analyze, and report identified data related to diversity and inclusion in the public sector.
3. The Public Service Commission should use data to inform decisions related to diversity and inclusion.

Objective:

4. To determine if the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice are promoting diversity and inclusion.

Criteria:

1. The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should be taking steps to promote diversity and inclusion, including compliance with government policy and participation in PSC programs and initiatives.
2. The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should be taking steps to promote diversity and inclusion that are consistent with the goals of *Raising the Bar: A strategy to build diversity and inclusion in the public sector*.
3. The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice should communicate diversity and inclusion initiatives, priorities, and policy requirements within their department.

Generally accepted criteria consistent with the objectives of the audit did not exist. Audit criteria were developed specifically for this engagement. Criteria were accepted as appropriate by senior management at the Public Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice.

Our audit approach consisted of reviewing any relevant legislation, policies, and procedures, along with testing for compliance. We interviewed management and staff within the Public



Service Commission and the departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice. We also reviewed the strategy and supporting documentation. Our audit period covered April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2018. We examined documentation outside of that period as necessary. We obtained sufficient and appropriate audit evidence on which to base our conclusions on May 16, 2019, in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Based on the reasonable assurance procedures performed and evidence obtained, we have formed the following conclusions:

- The Public Service Commission has completed work to promote diversity and inclusion, but all actions outlined in *Raising the Bar: A strategy to build diversity and inclusion in the public sector* were not completed and an assessment of whether the goals of the strategy were met has not been done.
- The Public Service Commission has not established a process to identify, collect, and analyze diversity and inclusion data.
- The departments of Agriculture, Community Services, and Justice are promoting diversity and inclusion, but improvements are needed.



Appendix II

Raising the Bar: A strategy to build diversity and inclusion in the public service – Goals and Strategic Actions

Raising the Bar included 32 strategic actions to promote diversity and inclusion. We selected 16 of these for testing to determine if the strategic action had been completed.

	Strategic Action Item	Tested (Yes/No)	Results of Testing
Goal 1: We demonstrate, and are accountable for, our ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion			
1	Develop an implementation plan and evaluation frameworks.	Yes	Incomplete
2	Resource the Respectful Workplace & Corporate Diversity Unit and strengthen its accountability.	No	N/A
3	Align the Respectful Workplace & Corporate Diversity Unit with Public Service Renewal, including the National Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace Standard.	No	N/A
4	Work with partners to foster the development of a broader service-delivery strategy.	Yes	Complete
5	Review diversity and inclusion-related policies and guidelines.	No	N/A
6	Review tools and processes to identify and remove systemic barriers.	Yes	Complete
7	Collaboratively assess the application of the new Intercultural and Diversity Proficiency competency.	Yes	Incomplete
8	Review and analyze classification of positions dedicated to diversity and inclusion work to inform further work.	Yes	Complete
9	Develop and implement a reciprocal mentorship program for senior leaders and employees from Under-represented Groups.	No	N/A
10	Enhance Employment Equity planning and reporting processes.	No	N/A
11	Improve collection and analysis of diversity data.	No	N/A
12	Identify ways to incorporate the use of qualitative research methods for evaluating diversity and inclusion in our work.	Yes	Incomplete
Goal 2: We equitably represent the public we serve at all levels of the workforce			
13	Develop and implement a diversity recruitment strategy to support recruitment of Under-represented Groups.	Yes	Incomplete
14	Ensure hiring processes are accessible to all.	No	N/A
15	Strengthen awareness of hiring panels about diversity and inclusion, including the Employment Equity Policy and Guidelines.	No	N/A
16	Increase participation of Under-represented Groups on hiring panels.	Yes	Incomplete



	Strategic Action Item	Tested (Yes/No)	Results of Testing
Goal 2 (continued): We equitably represent the public we serve at all levels of the workforce			
17	Imbed diversity and inclusion in orientation for all new government employees.	No	N/A
18	Ensure orientation is accessible to all, including availability in English and French.	Yes	Complete
19	Develop capacity to support employees from Under-represented Groups so they can navigate their career development and advancement pathways.	Yes	Complete
20	Ensure the leadership experience gained through diversity and inclusion work is recognized and valued in career development and advancement pathways.	No	N/A
Goal 3: We ensure an inclusive and respectful workplace, free of harassment and discrimination			
21	Implement Positive Spaces Initiative and Guidelines to support transgender and gender-nonconforming employees.	Yes	Complete
22	Explore opportunities for the inclusion of Women in Non-traditional Roles in government workplaces.	Yes	Incomplete
23	Explore opportunities for the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in government workplaces.	No	N/A
24	Develop tools and resources for conducting diversity and inclusion workplace assessments.	Yes	Incomplete
25	Develop expertise within the public service to carry out diversity and inclusion workplace assessments.	No	N/A
Goal 4: We are a culturally competent workforce that values diversity and inclusion			
26	Create a diversity and inclusion lens for reviewing and developing learning programs and materials.	Yes	Complete
27	Review and enhance current Respectful Workplace and Diversity training courses.	No	N/A
28	Imbed diversity and inclusion in the development process for new learning offerings.	No	N/A
29	Develop and implement diversity and inclusion guidelines for all external learning and development service providers.	No	N/A
30	Develop and implement a plan to engage employees and partners in the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.	Yes	Incomplete
31	Create platforms for dialogue, learning, and collaboration about ongoing diversity and inclusion work.	Yes	Complete
32	Consider new networks and partners.	No	N/A